

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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BOARD APPROVES MEASURES TO HELP LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – At a special-called meeting today in Frankfort, the Kentucky Board of Education approved state regulation 703 KAR 5:180, which describes an intervention system for the state's lowest-performing public schools.

The regulation provides implementation details for House Bill 176 (codified as KRS 160.346), which was unanimously passed by both the Kentucky House and Senate and signed into law by Gov. Steve Beshear over the past few days.

"This has been a truly collaborative process among educators, legislators and P-12 partners," said Kentucky Board of Education Chair Joe Brothers. "It is evidence of the firm commitment that our legislative body, local school officials and citizens have to the future success of Kentucky's children."

House Bill 176 was put on a fast track for approval so that its provisions could be included in Kentucky's application for federal Race to the Top funding. Race to the Top is a competitive process in which states developed applications that indicated how they would address four key P-12 education areas:

- adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace
- recruiting, developing, retaining and rewarding effective teachers and principals
- building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices
- turning around our lowest-performing schools

The new regulation provides definitions for activities and processes that will be implemented in schools that are defined as "persistently low achieving," based on their performance on state academic assessments.

(more)

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The regulation:

- defines terms related to the assessment of school and district capacity to implement strategies for improvement
- specifies when school and district leadership assessments will occur, what elements will be assessed, methodology used and frequency
- requires the selection of one of four intervention options established by House Bill 176 for those schools identified as persistently low-performing
- defines specific actions that a school or district should take when engaging in one of the four options
- establishes a process and criteria for the selection of External Management Organizations

As enabled by HB 176, schools identified as low-performing may engage in one of four intervention options:

- **external management option** -- requires that the day-to-day management of the school be transferred to an education management organization that may be a for-profit or nonprofit organization that has been selected by a local board of education from a list of management organizations
- **restaffing option** -- requires the replacement of the principal and the existing school-based decision making council unless audit reports recommended otherwise; screening of existing faculty and staff with the retention of no more than 50 percent of the faculty and staff at the school; development and implementation of a plan of action that uses research-based school improvement initiatives designed to turn around student performance
- **school closure option** -- requires the closure of an existing school and the transfer of its students to other schools within the district that are meeting their accountability measures and reassignment of the school's faculty and staff to available positions within the district
- **transformation option** -- includes replacing the school principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation option and replacing the school council members unless audit reports recommended otherwise and instituting an extensive set of specified strategies designed to turn around the identified school

Both House Bill 176 and 703 KAR 5:180, the regulation approved today by the Kentucky Board of Education, will take effect immediately. However, under the provisions of the bill and regulation, schools will not be identified as “persistently low-performing” until the results of the state assessments in reading and mathematics are available in the summer of 2010.

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